



### **The Issue: Collective Bargaining**

Congress is considering legislation that would force municipalities to enter into collective bargaining arrangements with their public safety employees, regardless of state and local laws. This legislation would place the federal government in charge of establishing the rules and procedures governing collective bargaining around salaries, hours, benefits, and conditions of employment at the municipal level. The National League of Cities and other state and public sector employer organizations oppose this legislation because it would place the federal government in charge of a fundamental employment decision – collective bargaining – that historically is reserved for the states and local governments.

### **Message to Congress**

- *The Public Safety Employer-Employee Cooperation Act of 2007 would federalize what has historically been a state and local responsibility.* Decisions about collective bargaining requirements for states and localities should be left to state legislatures, city and county elected officials, and other elected officials who represent their constituents and reflect their values and opinions.
- *States and localities are in the best position to make decisions about collective bargaining.* Currently, 35 states and the District of Columbia have some form of collective bargaining. Fifteen states do not. Voters in states without collective bargaining have the authority to vote for collective bargaining if they choose, either through their state legislatures or general elections. In the past, many of those state legislatures have reconsidered collective bargaining repeatedly, and rejected it for reasons unique to that state.
- *Federally mandated collective bargaining for public safety employees would interfere with existing state civil service laws.* Most states, cities, and towns, operate within a civil service system designed to provide individuals with salaries appropriate to their profession and seniority, comprehensive health insurance, and pensions that meet or exceed pensions provided by the federal government.
- *Public safety officers employed by the Congress and Executive do not have the right to negotiate wages and conditions of employment.* Any action taken by the United States Congress that would force states and localities to negotiate around salaries and conditions of employment should also apply to all federal public safety officers.

### **Request to Congress**

- **Oppose** any federal legislation that interferes with a municipal government's right to determine for itself whether the salaries, hours, benefits and conditions of employment for its employees shall be subject to collective bargaining. The federal government should respect the longstanding distinction between state and local responsibilities, and federal ones.
- **Oppose** federal legislation that would provide any single class of employees – in this case public safety workers – with special rights and privileges.